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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001876

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: JUNE 1 SULIMANIYAH INCIDENT

REF: ANKARA 1352

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Post appreciates Ankara's reftel assessment and suggestions regarding the June 1 encounter between Turkish Special Forces and Peshmerga in Sulimaniyah. We recognize Turkish sensitivity to even what would appear to be a very minor incident.

¶2. (C) KRG officials and Kurdish media indicated that on June 1, during routine search operations in a Sulimaniyah commercial district, Peshmerga units stopped a car containing a group of Turkish Special Forces dressed in civilian clothing. All sources agree the Turks were armed (there is disagreement about the type of weapon) and also carrying global positioning equipment in the vehicle. A short stand-off ensued, which may have involved raised weapons and sharp words. The standoff ended when the Turks identified themselves and the Peshmerga allowed them to proceed without further incident.

¶3. (C) The EPRT has contacted the Governor's Office in Sulimaniyah as well as local senior security officials to underscore Turkish sensitivity to the incident. KRG security officials told EPRT that the Peshmerga have begun conducting routine searches of vehicles over the past month in response to recent terrorist bombings in Erbil and Makhmour. They plan to continue the searches as a way to deter further terrorist incidents but stated they are in no way specifically targeting Turkish forces for the searches. According to Kurdish Security Officials, the Peshmerga apologized once the Turks' identity was clear. MNF-I has also been in contact with PUK security leaders.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador will remind Iraqi President Talabani of Turkish sensitivity to such incidents when Talabani returns to Baghdad, and will discuss with Barzani on his next trip to Erbil. We have given the same message to FM (and senior KDP member) Zebari.  
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